the Emperor Michael of Constantinople* to King Louis le Piteable,† son & successor of Charlemagne, were written in Greek.[18] It follows therefore that the Greek letters were current here before the Latin ones, since they were more highly esteemed, & the said Latins were in those days† still in the uncouth and rude stage, as one can plainly see in the works of the authors & writers of that time, like Grecismus,[19] Tardivus, Alanus de Parabolis, Floretus, Compotus, Alexander de Villa Dei, and many others, who are not worth calling to mind because of the crudeness and rude language of their works, rather Latin-y than Latin, that is to say, without elegance and without flowers of rhetoric.

* *Michael II, Byzantine Emperor*, 820-829.

† *Louis I* (814-840), *King of the Franks and Holy Roman Emperor, who was commonly known as Louis the Pious, or 'Le Débonnaire.'*

‡ *That is, in the time of St. Denis, who lived in the third century*, A.D.

MOreover, when St. Denis, St. Rusticus, and St. Eleutherus came from Athens to Paris to give instruction in the Christian faith, like the Greeks that they were, they taught it in Greek rather than in Latin, in memory whereof we see that, even to this day, on the feast of St. Denis, the religious of the church & convent of l'Abbaye St. Denis in France chant the gospel of their high mass in Greek. For which reasons, let anyone deny it who will, it seems to me that the Greek and Hebrew letters were current here before the Latin, & that what so increased the authority of the said Latin was only the arrogance and insatiable avarice of the Romans, who desired to destroy utterly the aforesaid excellent ancient & divine tongues, and to put theirs above them, which falls far short of them in every element of perfection, as they can well judge who know all three, or only the Greek and Latin. My lord Budé, diamond and pearl among learned and well-lettered Parrhisians, has written most elegantly of the likenesses between the Greek & Latin letters, in the third book of his excellent work *De Asse*, and can therein abundantly satisfy those who desire more ample knowledge of the said Greek letters.

IF I had been able to find written mention of our letters *de forme* and *bastarde*, or, as I have said before, if I could have found any man willing and able to instruct me about them, I would have set them in order, according to their true proportions; but, God willing, that will be for another time. At this moment I will discourse only of the Attic Letters, which are commonly called Antique letters, and, by abuse, Roman letters. But first I beg good students & true lovers of well-made letters to forgive me if I have been a little long in thus digressing to lament the sterility of our hands, which are too ill-cared-for to write well.

THE said Attic letters are properly called Attic, and not Antique, or Roman; because the Athenians made use of them before the Romans or any man in their Italy, however much the said Romans and Italians have made parade of them in their sumptuous palaces and triumphal arches, as one can see in Rome, by the ruins that are found here and there in a great part of that city, surrounded by duck ponds.

I Purpose to say here a thing unknown to many studious persons, howbeit I know that there are tens of thousands more learned than I am. It is that this said Attic letter was invented in a country of Greece called Ionia, which is, as Pomponius Mela says,* at the edge of Asia Minor, between Caria and Æolia. Ionians first invented, drew, & proportioned it. But the Athenians, who were the sovereign lords & masters of all Greece, brought it into use and credit, so that it has and still retains their name. To show that it is true that the Ionians invented these Attic letters, and that not only the Athenians, but all other nations made use of them, Pliny says at the end of Book VII of his Natural History, in chapter LVII: *Gentium consensus tacitus primus omnium conspirauit vt Ionum literis vterentur.* That is to say: by the universal agreement of all peoples, the Ionian letters were used by all. This invention was converted into a legend, as the Greeks were wont to do in all matters; as can be sufficiently seen in Boccaccio's book *De Genealogia Deorum*.†

* '*Cosmographia*,' I, 2, 66.

† *The Greek custom of converting all things into legends is shown by the work as a whole rather than by any particular passage.*

THey pretended that Jupiter was once enamoured of the daughter of King Inachus, to such a pitch that, in order to have his pleasure of her alone, he surrounded her with darkness. But Juno, sister & spouse of Jupiter, perceiving that darkness, jealous spouse as she was, suspected what was toward, and came down to earth to see what that darkness signified, it being broad day. Whereupon Jupiter, seeing her approach, in order to conceal his actions, changed his love into the shape of a beautiful young cow. But Juno did not give over her purpose, & began slyly to praise the cow's beauty, & finally asked her husband for her as a gift. Jupiter, finding himself at a loss for an excuse, could not deny her, and gave the cow to her. And straightway, when she had her for her own, she thanked him; and, being in haste to take vengeance for the affront, she gave her in charge to her shepherd, one Argus, who had in his face and all over his head a hundred eyes, which never slept all at the same time, but two by two, while the others kept watch. This Argus treated her harshly, often beating her with his heavy cudgel, throwing stones at her head and tail and legs, driving her hither and yon during the great

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